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THE GARDEN CALENDAR

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

A radio talk by Mr. W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered through Station WRC and 35 other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, May 6, 1930.

I am talking to the boys today, but have no objection to the girls and the grown-ups listening in if they want to. I am still somewhat of a boy myself - never quite grew up I suppose - so I get a great kick and a lot of fun out of being with a bunch of real lively American boys. I wonder how many of the boys within the range of my voice today have any real idea as to what they want to do for a living when they start out for themselves. I had no idea at your age I assure you, and it was just a little thing - a remark made by my high school teacher that pointed the way to a decision. The late Dr. S. A. Knapp, founder of the Extension Service and the boys and girls 4H club movement, spoke a great truth when he said "It is the little things that count most." Next to a good personality the careful observance of the little things count most in any boy's makeup. When I was a small boy I never did know where I left my hat or whether I had turned the horses out to pasture and fastened the gate. After much persuasion on the part of my father and mother I outgrew many of these careless habits.

I started out to tell you about a group of boys here in Washington, D. C. known as the Civitan Boys' Garden Club. Like any other city Washington has its problem with boys, especially those between the age of 8 and 14 years, to keep them off the streets and out of mischief. Several years ago a small group of public spirited Washington folks started this club with about 12 or 15 boys but soon ran into several problems including the financing of the work, getting some competent person to direct it, and to find a suitable location for the gardens. Right here is where the Civitan Club of Washington came into the picture and for the past several years have not only financed the movement but in cooperation with the Juvenile Protective Association and the Department of Agriculture have sponsored it.

Every Saturday morning during the growing season 70 to 80 boys report at the gardens which are located in one of the Government parks along the river and spend the morning working their gardens under the direction of a former Pennsylvania gardener and rural school teacher. The gardens are small, only about one-fortieth acre in size but due to intensive cultivation a wonderful lot of fresh vegetables are grown on each of these gardens. I happen to know that the vegetables carried home by some of the boys have been a very material help to some of their families. It is not the vegetables that are produced that is of most importance but the training that the boys are getting under competent leadership and supervision. Once a year the boys are given a picnic and certain prizes are offered for the best gardens and good attendance.

The club is largely self governing with a President, Secretary and Treasurer. These officers together with two additional members form the Board of Directors. All matters of discipline or policy are referred to the Board of Directors or if it is anything of importance it is brought before the entire club. The Civitan Club of Washington furnishes the tools, seeds and fertilizers and pays the superintendent. Any group of people such as the Civitans, Kiwanis, Rotary, or any similar group can do a good work by starting and main-

taining a Boys' Garden Club of this character and I will be glad to give you a lot of information on how to go about it. I do know that a club of this character is one of the best ways of interesting a lot of the boys of a neighborhood who are just knocking around wondering what they are going to do next. You will be surprised to see how readily city reared boys take to the gardening work and how expert they become. We have boys in our club who were with us at the start and are still enthusiastic. There is something about the cultivation of the soil and the growing of crops that gets a real hold on the boy and when the first radishes or onions are pulled or the first tomatoes ripen great is their enthusiasm and pride.

Our problem has been to take care of all the boys who come to us wanting to be enrolled in the Club, in fact we always have a long waiting list. The girls too have wanted to come into the club but we have kept it strictly a boys' club.

I will just have time to mention two Farmers Bulletins that are of special interest to home gardeners. One is entitled Diseases and Insects of Garden Vegetables and is Farmers Bulletin 1371, and gives brief information on how to protect garden crops from the more troublesome insects and diseases. The other bulletin is called the City Home Garden but really contains information on how to grow a small vegetable garden regardless of whether it is located in town or in the country. It is Farmers Bulletin 1044. These two bulletins constitute a sort of working library for any of the boys or girls who undertake to plant and tend a garden for themselves.